18: Priklonski--82 [4] E-5 (no date) 1891 Yakut
116, 764, 767

The dead are usually buried the next day, i. e. after the time necessary to arrange the burial. The corpse is washed and dressed in the best clothes: fur, fur cap, furred boots, and gloves; a pipe is put in the hand, and a tobacco bag laid near it. If the defunct was a hunter he is given bow and arrows; was he skillful in eviscerating animals and tanning hides, he gets the tools he used in his trade; was he a good bear hunter he is provided with a palma, i. e. a stick with a heavy iron end; with a spear or a hanger. A smith will get tools for boring holes (sugoltča), or a hammer (chtie). Every corpse is buried together with a pocket-knife (bygach; bys 'to cut'), an item no one would like to miss in one's lifetime.

It happens extremely seldom that the relatives bring the corpse to rest. As a rule there are certain people among the natives known as kjuvess, who dress the corpse, bring it to the burial ground, and bury it. They form a special guild of workers, a kind of undertakers with whom the family of the defunct agree upon a price, usually a cow, a bull, or the horse the deceased used to ride in his lifetime.

18: Priklonski--82 [6] E-5 (no date) 1891 Yakut
116, 493, 764, 767

After the corpse has been dressed it is taken away by the kjuvess (either alone or with the aid of companions) on a sledge. These wooden sledges, syyrgà as the Yakuts call them, are of the usual kind which is used to transport wood and other things needed in domestic life. No new sledge is made for this purpose. It must be borne in mind that vehicles on wheels have not been in use among the Yakuts until thirty or forty years ago, and the use of horses before a carriage is even more recent. In former times those who could not ride on horseback, e. g. children or sick persons, would move on a sledge drawn by an ox, through the whole year. It may be no more than fifteen years ago that noble Yakut women, paying visits to one another, still drove on peasants' sledges which were covered only with rugs, at summer time. The sledge driver rides on the ox, holding in his left hand a bridle to which a wooden ring is attached. The ring is fixed in the nostrils of the ox.

18: Priklonski--82-83 E-5 (no date) 1891 Yakut-1-2
116, 177, 764, 767, 825

The grave, grave structure, or grave-mound is made by the kjuyess. Various forms have survived to the present time:

a) in a forest trees with many branches are chosen which form a short-sided quadrangle. At a height of two or three yards above the ground some horizontal timbers are laid on the trees; and upon these timbers the hollow trunk with the corpse is put. Such a burial place is known as Arangàs. In cases of emergency the hollow trunk is replaced by a rough chest.

b) in those areas where there are few or no woods corpses are put on the ground [83] in a trough made of birch bast or a hollow lodje [RCH: i.e., wooden boats] (vytka), and covered with boards. The rainstorms of the spring and melting snow flood those vytkas unless they have been destroyed before by common and stone foxes and other animals living on corpses.

c) To avoid this, in the northern part of the area the chest with the corpse is set on wooden pegs which rise a little above the ground. The corners of the grave are also adorned with wooden stork figures, a bird which enjoys particular veneration on the part of the shamans. The stork helps the souls of the dead to rise to heaven, the abode of the good spirits.

d) The last sort of dealing with a corpse is burial in the ground. With spade and pick-axe a hole, rarely more than one or one and a half yards deep, is dug. The ground in the

18: Priklonski--82-83 E-5 (no date) 1891 Yakut-2
116, 177, 764, 767, 825

Yakut area does not thaw deeper than half a yard; in the Lena delta it is only the moss which then is dotted with small pools, at the bottom of which is perpetual ice. The custom of burying the dead in the ground is certainly due to Christian influence. This is suggested by the fact that carved crosses with oil paint are put on those graves. The hole is then enclosed in a fence.

18: Priklonski--83 E-5 (no date) 1891 Yakut-1-2
116, 764, 767

Fear of the dead sometimes reaches such a degree that all the inhabitants of a yurta may flee away before the man has actually died. Thus recently, an old, honorable man, who used to read from the psalter at the side of the deceased, told me the following happening which he himself had experienced: Two Yakuts had come to town (Yakutsk) to see him and to ask him to read psalms for a dead man and to bury him. They led him to the yurta where he found the dead man lying on the oron (Yakut word), i. e. on a couch or part of the couch, opened the door for him, pushed him into the hut and hid themselves somewhere. Nobody was in the yurta, yet it was obvious that it had been abandoned a short time before. After a while a cattle leg was thrown into the hut for him. It became night, and no one came to the yurta. However, there was some wood and water, and the psalter reader prepared something to eat for himself. The next day the door of the yurta was opened and a coffin in form of a square chest was pushed in. The old man was also notified that there was a sledge with the ox waiting outside. When at last the time came to put the corpse in the chest, to carry it out of the hut, to load it on the sledge, to drive to the place agreed upon, to let the coffin down into the grave, and to fill the grave up, it was all up to the old man. The yurta was situated in a desert where he could not find any other inhabited place or discover any person who might have been to him of some assistance; so the old man rolled the corpse down from the oron into the coffin placed below, pulled the latter out of the hut, tugged it on the sledge, and, after his arrival at the place of destination, he let the coffin down to the grave as well as he

could. Not a single relative or friend of the deceased had come to this burial. - If people cry during burial ceremonies, they do so sincerely and without hypocrisy, or out of some calculation, e. g.: "To whom hast thou, o father and supporter, left thy orphans?" etc. As a rule they cry silently lest other people should observe them. They try not to talk of the deceased especially at dusk, in order to avoid the return of the evil spirit who has robbed the dead man's soul.